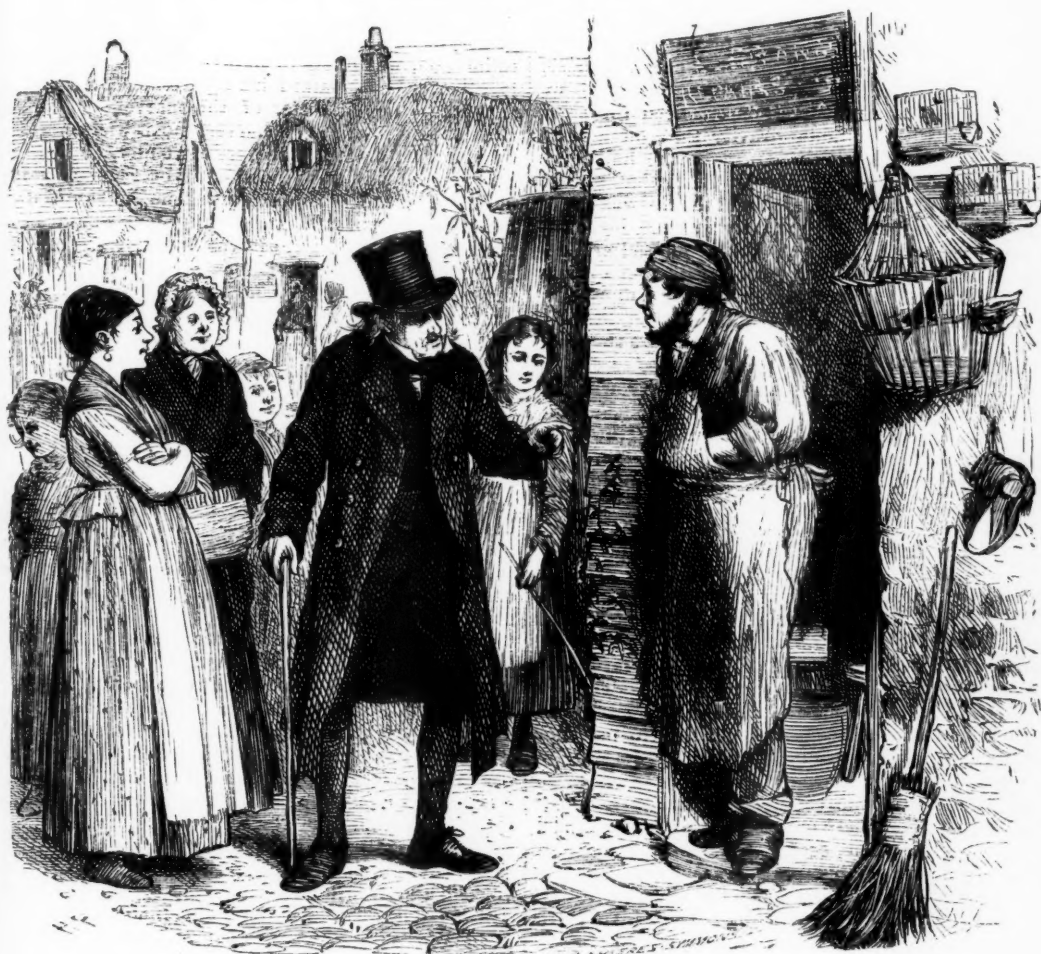


# THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cowper.*



JACOB MARTIN, THE OLD PARISH CLERK.

## CROSS CURRENTS

CHAPTER II.

**TARLETON**, situated in one of the flat midland counties, has been described in some of the old gazetteers as a town on the Tarle, yet at the time of which we are writing, and probably far earlier, it was nothing more than a village, long and straggling. The clerk of the parish, a learned man in his way, and fond of the place for the substantial reason that

he was born there, used to boast that Tarleton had sixteen miles of high-road round and about, leading to the three market towns in its neighbourhood; but as the few well-to-do farmers living there had to pay smartly for this advantage in the shape of rates and turnpikes, old Jacob Martin, as he was called, stood out alone conspicuous in the appreciation of it. For those not inclined to accept roads and miles as the measurement of beauty, it must be admitted that Tarleton had nothing in particular to recommend it.

It was much like other large villages, with an average number of flowering hedges, especially in the autumn, green lanes, and rich meadows, peaceful-looking and truly English. It had a river and two bridges crossing its principal street—that is, bridges for foot-passengers, when they did not prefer picking their way from stone to stone over the stream below; carriages, gigs, pony-chaises, and farmers' carts had no alternative but to cross the river twice when driving from one end to the other. Innocent as the silver threads appeared gliding without bubble or babble over the pebbly bottom in the warm summer days, old Martin remembered the time when the waters raged and swelled, and did "a mort of mischief," and he loved to talk about it. It was harvest time, he said, after a severe thunderstorm, when the corn went down as if mown by the sickle, and the hailstones fell as big as eggs. The younger villagers, taking pleasure in joking the old man, would reply that such as those, and bigger too, fell every year; and one of them, more vaggish than the rest, once capped the story by relating with suitable gravity that on a farm farther off, where his brother worked, the hailstones fell as large as a lump of chalk! After that Martin became more precise, and stated that the hail was larger than plovers' eggs. His garrulity was not, however, to be repressed by a joke. He recollected and delighted to tell of that wonderful storm when Farmer Barnard lost a hundred sheep and more, and Widow Ward's pigs had the staggers. She thought they were pricked in their mind, but he was sure they had been struck. The lightning was a sight to see. The event the most firmly fixed in his memory was the extraordinary rain. The river was full, touched the wooden bridges, and came up to the top of the bank—almost. Martin prided himself upon his veracity, and never overshot the mark without pulling himself up and satisfying his conscience with an *almost*.

"Old Mrs. Ellis, of the Hall," he related, "had to go to her granddaughter's christening, and would not believe that the water was too high to pass. She was a dragon of daring, she was"—perhaps Martin meant to liken her to a dragoon. "The more folks advised her not to go, the more she would; so, taking the spring cart of the farm and a boy to mind the horse, she drove herself. They do say that when she came to the water and saw the width it had taken, she seemed inclined to pull up, and perhaps would have done so but for Jem Coke, who could not help saying, 'I told you it was more nor you nor any one could do for another hour,' which put the old lady on her metal. She whipped up old Smiler, and he, seeming to know what was in the mind of his missus, pulled through. The first bridge passed, Dame Ellis was down upon Jem for a lazy coward. There was another deep bit yet to come. Smiler went on bravely, but strength and good will can't fight against the elements. The water came into the cart, and Jem, anxious to take care of himself, lifted up his legs, forgetting the bandbox standing between them, of which he had especial charge. Out it tumbled, with the lid off, and away went the best cap and wig of the missus. The children and a lot of idle folk who came to see the floods out, saw it all, and began screaming, laughing, and running, but the things weren't recovered very easily, and were never fit for much afterwards. No," old Martin said, "he never could forget those floods, nor the old lady's vexation. She never took kindly to being laughed at, and was terribly angry when she

heard that the history of her cap and wig was turned into a doggerel rhyme and sung as a standing jest in the public house, and once at her own harvest-home."

Notwithstanding Jacob's reminiscences, the Tarle showed no such mischievous propensities now. Farther on it flowed faster and deeper, but where it intersected the road between the bridges there was barely water enough for the pastime of the tiny minnows which spent the livelong summer's day in darting quickly from one side to the other. "And it all came of the harvest moon, that I know." With this sentence old Martin usually wound up the oft-told tale. The phenomenon of the harvest moon was a sore puzzle to him. He could not arrive at any satisfactory explanation of it, though for upwards of forty years he had been doing his best to understand it, by sounding the opinions of the parson, doctor, or any chance visitor to Tarleton who, in his estimation, was likely to stand out above the rest in learning. What passed his comprehension assumed somewhat the character of the marvellous, tinged with superstition. The harvest moon was regarded by him with a kind of reverent wonder, and was in his eyes the supposed cause, near or remote, of the autumnal events of the village. The old squire died before it began, and the young one would have returned perhaps before it was out, and the captain had met with such misfortunes, all happening about the same period. "No, he knew he should never get to the bottom of it." This was his habitual conclusion when talking the subject over with his friend the shoemaker, who, from possessing certain parts and greater pretensions, had been named by the villagers Counsellor Franks.

Poor Jacob had another trial: the former rector was dead, and the new one, his nephew, made some changes highly distasteful to that lesser dignitary. He could not "abide" the present ways, though he had too much respect for the cloth to venture upon open remonstrance. He only shook his head with a solemn air, remarking rather complacently, "We used to do it better in the old days, sir—your uncle and I; that we did."

Yet even Mr. Saunders, senior, had been obliged to yield a little to the pressure of the times by setting aside the village musicians and introducing an organ. That innovation cost Martin a few sighs and groanings; but even he, prejudiced as he was by a lifetime's use to the flutes and violoncellos of the rural performers, saw at last the expediency of taking power from hands often too ignorant or too wilful to exercise it properly. Never, however, had he gone so far as to like the organ—he only tolerated it, greatly preferring to hear the sound of his own voice distinctly when he raised the hymn to the tone of the pitch-pipe. His quavering notes were not so good now as they were when on one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, rising up boldly in his place, he came to the rescue of his rector. The giving-out of the psalm being succeeded by an ominous silence, instead of the customary creaking of fiddle-strings, it became evident that the musicians were sulky. They intended to punish their pastor for having reproved one of their number for some offence during the past week. Jacob, hot and indignant, raised the tune as usual, and maintained it bravely alone, until a few of the congregation took courage and joined him. With such an able assistant, Mr. Saunders continued to dispense with his village choir. Jacob liked to tell the story and gloried in having hauled these

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rustics of their revenge upon the clergyman. After that occurrence he gave his consent to having an organ—somewhat reluctantly, for he secretly thought the singing might be managed without—and even carried about the parish a book for subscriptions, but generally under protest. It was a concession to the degeneracy of these modern days; and this, too, he used to relate, happened in harvest time. Everything that went wrong seemed to have some connection, near or remote, with the harvest moon!

Tarleton had other characters besides old Jacob Martin and his friend the Counsellor, but no aristocracy. There were several large farmers, rich enough to keep a pleasure-chaise or pony-carriage and play the gentleman, but only two families who claimed to belong to the class styled landed gentry. One, the Ashworths of Tarleton Manor, had wealth to sustain the position, and was accordingly well esteemed in the neighbourhood. The late squire, though simple in some tastes, was expensive in others. He liked hunting, kept the best horses, and was always willing to give a friend a mount. With his handsome income strictly entailed, many wondered that he permitted his only son to go to India. Ray had no objection, and the squire wished it. The bold, generous spirit of his nephew had early won the old man's admiration, and he did all he could to keep the cousins together, hoping that the high-toned mind of the elder would be a better guide to the younger than he would find at home. The result Squire Ashworth did not live to see. One morning, contrary to his habit, he rose late, came downstairs to breakfast, could not find his way about his own hall, was carried back to bed, and died the next day.

In spirit, village diplomacy is much the same as that of kingdoms. "Le roi est mort," solemnly wailed over the lowered flag, is quickly succeeded by the joyful shout, "Vive le roi!" which welcomes the unfurled banner of the new heir.

So was it in Tarleton. The squire was regretted at first, but all the tenantry, and many of the villagers too, were soon thinking of Ray, and he was now almost daily expected. The village was astir to do its duty: there were to be bonfires, sky-rockets, and the church bells were to ring out their merriest peal.

Something must be said about these church bells, for they were quite renowned. So great was their fame that the best ringers of the neighbourhood around would ask to be allowed to practise on them, and on a summer's eve would sometimes send vibrating through the air a succession of joyous sounds belonging to old-fashioned tunes which the most liberal could not consider orthodox.

As may be supposed, Jacob, who had listened to them for so many years, had a great affection for these bells, and yet a severe grievance was connected with them. One of them having been discovered to be cracked, was by a vestry decision sentenced to be sold, an injury he deeply resented. "It never was theirs, nor mine, nor yours, nor anybody's to sell," he would assert with energy to any listener he could find; "it is the Almighty's bell—as much a part of his house as my chairs and tables are of mine. Would the law permit you to come and dispose of those because you wanted money? No; neither can it allow them to sell the bell. Scores of times I have told them they cannot offer for sale the furniture of God's house. But, bless you! those farmers have not an ounce of learning amongst them all, and only think of keeping down the rates and making money.

Not one of them, I'll be bound, ever troubles himself to think about explaining the harvest moon, though they see it every year of their lives. Ah! some day they will be punished for their avarice. I should not be surprised if there comes another thunder-storm and strikes the tower and bells too. I don't care much about them now, they are spoilt for me."

Yet, notwithstanding Jacob Martin's oft-expressed displeasure, he felt as strong a desire as any that the bells should do their duty in welcoming the young squire, and was as anxious as others to secure the best ringers to do him honour on his arrival.

At the other end of the village, with about three miles of road between it and the manor, was a small property called "The Bury," belonging to the Fellowes family, to whom it had descended from father to son for many generations, a succession likely now to be interrupted for two reasons: first, the only child of Mr. Fellowes was a daughter; and next, by some fatality, or more probably fault, the estate deteriorated under every fresh owner, and was at the present time of so little value that the lazy farming of the proprietor barely sufficed for the maintenance of his household. Some distant ancestor of Mr. Fellowes's was in feudal times a great lord, living in Tarleton Castle, every stone of which had been removed, or was buried under the unequal mounds of earth still visible in the only remaining relic of that past grandeur—namely, a large space called the castle orchard. It is surrounded by a deep dip, still bearing the name of the moat, interrupted in one part by a causeway which appears to be the remains of a bridge of communication. Vegetation does not thrive in this orchard. A few sour plum and crab trees—the special booty of the enterprising urchins who, clambering up the steep banks, obtain admission into a favourite playground without passing the house—and a little coarse hay, gathered in at the end of the autumn, represent the full value of this large area of land.

"The Bury," a low, long, rambling house, built this side of the moat, was very old, and not at all dull-looking. Repairs and modernisings had so completely changed the building that nothing now remained of the style of architecture mentioned in the chronicles. It was full of points, and the upper windows, projecting over the lower, were large, and made that part of the house very cheerful. A pretty garden, beyond which extended a spacious green, with a cottage here and there, was in front, and the river, not in threads, as in the centre of the village, but flowing through a portion of its deepest channel, was behind.

Within "The Bury" for some time past there had been more stir and business going on than usual—ladies' business, for the important matter of selecting a trousseau may be classed under that head. Ray and Piers were daily expected, or, at least, the announcement of their arrival in France, if not in England. Obedient to Captain Ashworth's last letter, Miss Hawtrey, with her aunt's assistance, was making preparations for her marriage, and Mrs. Fellowes was quite in her element. The breakfast was hardly over one bright morning in the last week of September when a servant entered, and half whispered to Mrs. Fellowes, "If you please, ma'am, Mr. Johnson's cart."

"Show him into the side-room," was the ready reply.

"What is that fellow come here for?" grumbled



Mr. Fellowes. "Why can't you buy what you want at Nutford? When he comes here, of course he brings all his old shopkeepers, and palms them off upon you as bargains. If you must buy, get the best for your money. Remember, I will have no bills. Pay for what you take, and I have nothing to say. I will have no bills for women's gear. If I were not firm upon that point I should be a ruined man in a week."

This was one of the few wise rules that Mr. Fellowes made, and as it did not curtail his own comforts, he kept to it. Mrs. Fellowes smiled complacently. Having anticipated a little gaiety at the return of the two cousins, and also the necessity of purchasing some extra finery at this peculiar time, she was prepared for the outlay.

"Of course, my dear, Clarice will buy the best part of her wardrobe in London; but thinking she might like to inspect Johnson's new things quietly, I ordered him to come over. Come, Clarice; come, Nina."

The first-named of the two who at this invitation followed Mrs. Fellowes, was a tall, handsome woman, almost regal in her carriage, who might have struck a casual observer as being the embodiment of a proud, haughty character, were it not for the graceful bend of her neck and her slight, supple figure. Her features were all good: the mouth faultless in shape, and the lips rosy, round, and smiling, indicating a happy, healthy life. There was at times a peculiar fascination in her smile; it brought a touching loveliness into her lustrous dark eyes, and softened an expression which sometimes might be thought hard and arrogant. Miss Hawtreys was an acknowledged beauty, more especially so in the estimation of gentlemen; the only defect that ladies could discover—something of an imperious bearing arising from the way in which her head seemed placed on her shoulders—was no defect in the eyes of the former, who easily reconcile themselves to obey the behests of the feminine idol they worship so long as the fancy lasts.

Nina Fellowes was only seventeen, eight years the junior of her cousin Clarice. She was pretty and graceful, with little character yet developed; a blonde, fair and sweet-looking, greatly resembling her mother in person, and presenting no traits to indicate that she would be dissimilar in mind. To Mrs. Fellowes she was an object of untiring admiration. For her she thought and would have schemed boldly, had not a wholesome fear of her husband's penetration and ridicule prevented her. Secret castle-building she did sometimes indulge in, and, like the fond foolish mother she was, precisely at the present time she was engaged in raising a scaffold to her pet ambition. But that she endeavoured to keep to herself; not for any consideration would she have allowed Mr. Fellowes to suspect her designs.

While the three ladies were occupied in inspecting the different articles Mr. Johnson had brought with him, Mr. Fellowes remained in the breakfast-room in a kind of brown study, with his hands plunged into his pockets, whistling softly before the window, until the jingling of keys made him look round. A young girl of diminutive stature had just locked up the tea-chest and thrown the keys into a basket.

"Hope, why do you stay here—why don't you go to Vanity Fair with the others?"

The small being addressed as Hope was certainly peculiar from her size and perfectly proportioned

form, and not unworthy of her name in the estimation of those who knew her well. Not only was she not pretty, but from being the plainest of the party, including even Mr. Fellowes, though no longer young, the personal advantages she had were habitually overlooked. Besides a general sweetness of manner proceeding from a sincere desire to make every one happy, she had a pair of shining, intelligent eyes, where honesty of character and tenderness of disposition were equally conspicuous. Her brow was smooth and open, her complexion naturally clear though by no means fair, with a bright, healthy colour on each cheek. She had a large, well-shaped mouth, with regular white teeth glistening between her lips, which were generally parted either to smile or to sing. Neither child nor woman in appearance, she was a happy mixture of both. Most frequently gay, but sometimes grave, she was mirthful or helpful, sensitive or sensible, as she could best serve others, and was to those who could discriminate both endearing and prepossessing. Yet Hope had one fault and one trial, one the effect of the other. She was more sympathetic to strangers than to her mother, who found it difficult to understand or pardon her independent spirit and continual neglect of her wishes in certain matters.

To the question asked by Mr. Fellowes Hope responded readily: "Mamma did not call me; and besides, I don't suppose I want anything new. If I do she will choose for me. I am so small that it does not much signify what I wear. No one will look at me when Clarice and Nina are present;" and having decided the matter entirely to her own satisfaction apparently, she skipped towards the door, saying, "I must not forget the flowers."

"Nor that little account of the repairs wanting in Widow Case's cottage, which you have to make out for me," replied Mr. Fellowes.

Hope nodded, and was presently in the garden snipping off old blossoms and gathering fresh ones, humming all the time some lively air, happy and busy as the bees that with the buzz of their morning orisons toiled and stored for the future. Hope was doing so too, but unconsciously—to live and think for others was the greatest pleasure she had.

Hope Wallis was the step-daughter of Mr. Fellowes, who had given her an equal, if not a higher place in his heart than Nina occupied. Prejudice usually runs the other way, and is often drawn from the same motive that, perhaps without his knowledge, swayed Mr. Fellowes. Selfishness, like a great watershed, may send its streams in totally opposite directions. Nina's life was altogether separated from her father's, for they had scarcely any taste in common. She loved her mother, and found no difficulty in responding to her caressing admiration, nor in pleasing a parent whose chief desire was to let her do what she liked best. With Mr. Fellowes it was different. He would have liked to turn her into a boy and take her about the farm with him, feeling no interest in fine-ladyism or that extreme delicacy which was so important in the eyes of his wife. Nina must not go out in the sun to injure her complexion, nor wear thick boots to spoil her feet; in short, she was to be a drawing-room beauty, and not a milkmaid. Mr. Fellowes then claimed Hope, and she having, as her mother said, no complexion to spoil, besides being incorrigibly careless, and neither elegant nor tidy, was allowed to accompany him in all weathers, much to the personal satisfaction

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of the little lady herself. Bright and buoyant, self-forgetting to an uncommon degree, Hope proved the best of companions to her step-father, who was generally dull except when roused to tease his wife, and selfish besides, preferring what he called *rubbing on*, in a lazy way, to the exertion of looking into his affairs and trying to mend them. But he was always kind to Hope, and would put himself out of his way for her more willingly than for any one else. Certain economical arrangements generally made by Mrs. Fellowes suddenly occurred to him. "If I do not interfere, it is most likely that a new dress will be bought for Nina, and Hope will be put off with her sister's old one because she is little. She shall have a new one for the wedding, if I pay for it myself," said Mr. Fellowes, and that he knew he would have to do as the price of his intermeddling. "Come, Hope," he called to her from the window, "come with me and see what sort of a man-milliner I make."

When they entered the room, Mrs. Fellowes was gathering a pale-blue silk into folds against her skirt, and looking towards Miss Hawtrey for approval.

"Is that for you, Clarice?" said Mr. Fellowes, touching the silk to examine its texture.

"I am undecided; choose for me, uncle. Is it pretty?"

"For you it may do as a variety." Mr. Fellowes was supposed to have good taste when he chose to exercise it, which was rarely; yet he sometimes offended his wife by telling her that she dressed more like a young woman on her promotion than a matron of forty-five. "I want something for my little Hope," he said, casting his eyes about. "There, that pretty pink stuff put on one side is just the thing."

"That is already selected," observed Mrs. Fellowes, turning away to look at something else.

"Then find me another, and equally pretty. Hope must be made as spruce as the rest of you. What with the wedding in prospect, and the return of the squire and the captain, our humdrum life must be a little changed for a short time. If you buy anything for yourself, remember that you are the wife of old Ned Fellowes, and not far from fifty. Never forget your age, my dear;" and chuckling over this Parthian shot, which he knew would be sufficiently annoying, Mr. Fellowes turned on his heel and left the room.

"My age, indeed!" ejaculated Mrs. Fellowes, still vexed and angry, some minutes after the draper had rolled up his goods and taken them away. "Your father, Nina, always carries his jokes too far. I shall never teach him better. How often I tell him that I have no particular age, just the same as others about my own standing." Having explained away her husband's remark to her own satisfaction, Mrs. Fellowes, restored to her natural placidity, began to examine her different purchases, and was already interested in contemplating their effect, when Mr. Fellowes returned with a note, directed to Clarice, which had been sent from "The Bower."

"News of the captain," he observed.

While Clarice turned away to read it, the gentleman amused himself with watching his wife, who was inspecting with obvious pleasure the pink gauzy fabric he had wished to secure for Hope.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked.

"What do you?" replied Mrs. Fellowes.

"What I told you, very pretty for Hope."

"It would not do for Hope at all; she is too small. White is much better for her."

"It is not for yourself, I hope?" continued Mr. Fellowes.

"Why not? Trimmed with black lace it will be very pretty and very suitable."

"For harlequin, or for a girl, not for you. My dear, you would be handsome still if you dressed according to your time of life. I don't care for mutton cooked lamb fashion."

"You are very vulgar, Mr. Fellowes," said the lady, indignantly withdrawing her chin from his hand. "Such innuendoes are ungentlemanly, and I wish you would not make them. I have no time of life, and have often told you so. Such an expression, in my opinion, only refers to very old people when they are bedridden or infirm."

"Or to babes an hour old.—What is it, Clarice?" Mr. Fellowes perceived that Miss Hawtrey was leaning against the window-frame and regarding them both as if waiting to speak.

"Mrs. Ashworth wishes me to go and see her at once; she has bad news to give me."

Forgetting the conjugal tilt, always a source of amusement to him, Mr. Fellowes took the offered letter and read aloud:—

"My dear Clarice,—Come to 'The Bower' as soon as you can. I have bad news, very bad news of the travellers.

"Yours affectionately,

"JANET ASHWORTH.

#### A DAY WITH HUGH MILLER.

ONCE spent a delightful day with Hugh Miller, in a geological excursion to the Siccar Point, on the east coast of Scotland. The Siccar Point is a small promontory about three miles to the north-west of St. Abb's Head in Berwickshire. It is noted for its cave that opens to the sea, and presents very splendidly to the geological observer the junction of the primary with the secondary rocks as these exist in the Lammermoor range, which, at St. Abb's Head, has its easterly termination. This cave has consequently become a classic place in geology, having been visited by the leading geologists of the last three generations. Its scientific importance seems to have been first discovered by Sir James Hall, of Dunglass, a distinguished geologist in his day, and the predecessor of Sir Walter Scott in the chair of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Sir James, on whose estate of Dunglass the Siccar Point is situated, brought out from Edinburgh on one occasion his eminent friends, Dr. James Hutton and Professor John Playfair, to examine scientifically the headland, with its cave and the adjoining coast, which is extremely interesting in a geological point of view. The visit of these three distinguished men of science to a spot romantic in its aspect as well as highly illustrative of modern geology, has been rendered memorable by the eloquent account of it Playfair has given in his admirable "Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory." After describing the locality, which he and his friends reached by boat from the small harbour of Cove, near Cockburnspath, the Professor expatiates on the interesting geological phenomena they observed, and thus reflects upon

the scene: "We felt ourselves necessarily carried back to the time when the schistus on which we stood was yet at the bottom of the sea, and when the sandstone before us was only beginning to be deposited in the shape of sand or mud from the waters of a superincumbent ocean. An epocha still more remote presented itself, when even the most eminent of these rocks, instead of standing upright in vertical beds, lay in horizontal planes at the bottom of the sea, and were not yet disturbed by that immeasurable force which has burst asunder the solid pavement of the globe. Revolutions still more remote appeared in the distance of this extraordinary perspective. The mind seemed to grow giddy by looking so far into the abyss of time; and while we listened with earnestness and admiration to the philosopher who was now unfolding to us the order and series of these wonderful events, we became sensible how much farther reason may sometimes go than imagination can venture to follow. As for the rest, we were truly fortunate in the course we had pursued in this excursion. A great number of other curious and important facts presented themselves, and we returned, having collected in one day more ample materials for future speculation than have sometimes resulted from years of diligent and laborious research."

It was now Mr. Hugh Miller's turn to visit this remarkable spot, and to tread in the steps, not only of Playfair and his friends, but of more recent geologists, like Jamieson, Maclaren, Buckland, and Sedgewick. He was living at Portobello, a suburb of Edinburgh, at the time, and proceeded on the 11th of August, 1847, by railway to Cockburnspath, the nearest station on the line to the Siccar Point. Along with two ladies, one of whom was an intimate friend and great admirer of the geologist, I joined him at Dunbar, having previously agreed to spend a day with him on the coast, and to give him the benefit of such local knowledge as I possessed. No sooner had we alighted at Cockburnspath than he picked up a stone, chipped it with a hammer which he pulled out of his pocket, and exclaimed, "What green greenstone!" This was a fair commencement of our geological work, but literary and other conversation occupied a full share of our time and thoughts.

We descended at once to the small harbour of the Cove, and engaged a boat to take us to the headland we wished to reach. The high sandstone cliffs, perforated with an artificial tunnel, at one time sheltered the boats of smugglers; but now the harbour is only used by a race of hardy fishermen. The scenery of the Cove is very striking, and quite in keeping with the romantic character of many localities in the neighbourhood. It is well known that many of the scenes and objects described in the "Bride of Lammermoor" are to be found near Cockburnspath. The fine old chapel in the grounds of Dunglass Castle, the seat of the Hall family, is the original of the chapel in which Lucy Ashton was married. Cockburnspath, or Ravenswood Tower, is little more than a mile off, on the post road to the south. Fast Castle, a grim ruin, perched on a high cliff upon the shore, between Cockburnspath and St. Abb's Head, is the Wolf's Crag of Scott's famous romance. All these buildings, hoary with time, but now renovated as it were by the touch of genius, Mr. Miller surveyed with that antiquarian and literary feeling which gave a charm to his scientific explorations.

As we sailed along the coast in a small fishing-boat, with only a young lad and a boy for our crew, some strong puffs of wind came suddenly down upon us from the neighbouring cliffs, and made us feel a little uncomfortable. The ladies looked alarmed, as the young sailors did not seem to understand their business very well, and I began to fear we might be in some danger. Mr. Miller, with characteristic coolness, advised us all to sit perfectly quiet, and not interfere with the management of the boat. I believe he also was not perfectly at ease; but he saw at once what was the safest course for us to follow. After a brief tossing we got into smooth water, beyond the reach of the troublesome little squalls, and in about half an hour landed comfortably at the Siccar Point.

As we scrambled over the large rough stones washed by the sea, and entered the capacious cave, we were struck at once with the romantic character and geological interest of the scene. Mr. Miller, soon standing on the spot where many years before Hutton had stood and lectured to Hall and Playfair, seemed immediately to comprehend the whole history of the cave and the surrounding rocks. He began in his quiet but effective manner to give his audience a lecture on the geology of the place. What Playfair has so well described he dwelt upon with evident delight; but some very interesting features, which the Edinburgh Professor seems to have overlooked, caught his practised eye, and gave rise to some ingenious explanations. On the right-hand side of the cave as you enter, for example, there is a singular collection of stalactic matter raised a little above the floor, and bearing a striking resemblance to the lower part of the trunk of a middle-sized tree, with its broad root out of the earth. Mr. Miller at once saw that this stalactic formation had taken place when the area or floor of the cave had stood higher than at present, and immediately read off its history in a most pictorial geologic style.

But I shall now give his own brief account of this Siccar Cave, published in his interesting paper on the "Geology of the Bass":—"The Siccar Point is hollowed into a wildly romantic cavern, open to the roll of the sea, and scooped almost exclusively out of an ancient bed of purplish-coloured clay-slate, raised, like the schist in which it is intercalated, in a nearly vertical angle, and which presents in the weathering a sort of fantastic fretwork, as if a fraternity of Chinese carvers had been at work on its sides for ages. And forming the roof of the cavern, and laid down as nicely horizontal on the sharp edges of the more ancient strata as if the levelling rule of the mason or carpenter had been employed in the work, we see stretching overhead the lowest bed of the old red sandstone. On this very point, with the noble cavern full in front, old Hutton stood and lectured; and he had for his auditory Playfair and Sir James Hall."

Having dismissed our boat, and determined to ramble back to the station along the shore, we ascended from the cave by a steep winding foot-path that has been formed upon the sea cliff for the convenience of explorers like ourselves. We were sorry to leave a scene of such surpassing interest, which we witnessed to such advantage on a fine autumn day; but as we had some interesting objects on the coast to visit, and as time, tide, and train wait for no man, we bade adieu to the Siccar Point and Cave after about an hour's examination, hoping that



we might individually or collectively see them both again. But that was one of the countless hopes which we all in this world lightly form and express, soon to be forgotten and never to be fulfilled. I have visited the spot more than once since that memorable day, but the great geologist of our party saw it no more.

From the Siccar we walked along the grass-covered, terrace-like head of the cliffs to the venerable ruins of St. Helen's Church, about a mile distant. This simple old Saxon church—one of the very oldest in Scotland—long left in a state of neglect and decay, interested Mr. Miller exceedingly. It is supposed to have been built in the seventh century, and dedicated, like many other churches of the period, to Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine. From its elevated site, overlooking the German Sea, and overlooked in turn by the neighbouring Lammermoor hills, it has a touching interest for the antiquarian and the lover of the picturesque. It is surrounded with a churchyard as ancient as itself, which contains the dust of thirty or forty generations, and still receives the dead of a few neighbouring families. Mr. Miller viewed this antique and mouldering structure with a professional and antiquarian feeling, while he endeavoured to read its history as he had been reading the history of an ancient temple of nature. He particularly admired the east window, with its fine old semi-circular Saxon arch, which after the casualties of twelve hundred years had been left entire, an interesting specimen of primitive architectural taste and skill. On such a spot it is impossible to stand unmoved. We looked with deep emotion upon one of the most ancient memorials of Saxon piety and early Christianity in Scotland. But on visiting the old church a few months after with two friends, one of them an English clergyman, I found to my consternation the fine Saxon arch of the window utterly demolished, and the remains of it stuck into the churchyard stone-dyke! The neighbouring farmer, or his men, wishing to mend the dyke, to keep the sheep or cattle, I suppose, out of the churchyard, had used such materials as could most easily be laid hold of or were thought most available for the purpose. Something in matters of this kind may be said in excuse of downright and unfortunate ignorance; but what can be pleaded for those landed proprietors who leave precious architectural remains on their estates at the mercy of ignorant tenants, and take not the slightest pains to preserve them from the Vandalism of the stone-dyers?

As we proceeded westward, we enjoyed more than ever the whole sweep of land and sea that lay before us, bathed in the yellow lustre of a calm autumn afternoon. Southward the Lammermoor range bounded the horizon, and ended in the lofty promontory of St. Abb's jutting into the ocean. To the north, the Isle of May, with its guardian lighthouse, the low coast of Fife, terminating in a ness or headland, and, far in the distance, the blue hills of Forfarshire, beyond Dundee, greeted the eye; while towards the west the Bass Rock at the mouth of the Forth, that lofty conical hill, North Berwick Law, and, in the nearer foreground, Doon Hill, where Leslie and the Covenanting army lay before the battle of Dunbar, all solicited our attention as notable and suggestive features of the landscape. But as we moved along, admiring the ever-shifting panorama of land and sea views, we arrived

at the Pease Burn, a stream that falls into the sea after winding through a deep ravine or dean of extraordinary wildness and beauty. This and several other ravines in the neighbourhood were occupied by detachments of Leslie's troops to prevent the escape of Cromwell's army to England. It was of the strength of the position at the Pease Burn that the English general wrote that "ten men to hinder are better than forty to make their way." But in a more peaceful time a magnificent stone bridge was thrown over that burn and its wildly-wooded dean by the skill of Telford. The Pease Bridge, the central arch of which is 120 feet above the level of the stream, is a noble piece of architecture surrounded with exquisite scenery; and it is constantly visited by picnic parties, as well as by solitary lovers of art and nature.

Mr. Miller examined with a professional eye the admirable work of Telford, built to carry across the Pease a new line of road between Cockburnspath and Berwick. Of the character and history of the great engineer, who had, like himself, commenced life as a stonemason, he spoke with great admiration, yet in that quiet manner which characterised him in social intercourse. On most subjects—scientific, literary, and political—his mind was pretty well made up; and on many his opinions were very decided; but in speech and deportment he was not by any means demonstrative or enthusiastic. The quiet style which prevails in "high society" seemed to be in him natural and unaffected, though it is quite possible that he may have habitually laid a restraint upon himself, as if determined to curb and keep down a native impetuosity of temper. Yet quietness of manner can best be accounted for by that modesty of genius which belonged to him—a modesty, strange to say, not inconsistent with a good deal of pride—and also by that Highland politeness and self-possession of which, though not strictly a Highlander, he had no small share.

As we lay on the grassy bank of the stream at our picnic dinner, surrounded with tall ferns and shady trees, and often eyeing the vast central span of the bridge, projected against the sky, like the arch of a rainbow, we had much pleasant talk, chiefly of a literary kind. Carlyle and his works, great topics of conversation at that time, we duly discussed. Mr. Miller expressed his admiration of Carlyle's genius, and of the high place he had won in English literature; but, in reply to the question whether he thought the writings of the "Chelsea philosopher" had done more good than harm, he only replied that they had, he hoped, done more good than harm to him. He admitted that Macaulay was a magnificent specimen of his class, but considered the class by no means the highest in our literature. He spoke of "the sophistry" of the great essayist in his treatment of certain moral and political topics; but he allowed his essays to be unique in their brilliancy, and his history of England to be a prodigy of its kind. Of the late Dr. James Hamilton he spoke with unfeigned admiration, saying that he had a "fine mind," and was really a man of genius. As we talked of poets, the name of Mrs. Hemans was mentioned, and he spoke with warmth of the sweetness and beauty of some of her poetry. Such are some of the fragments of our conversation at our burn-side meal; and I only wish I could recall more of the words that fell from my gifted friend on the occasion.

On our return to Cockburnspath Station, we passed the fine old tower that is supposed to be described in the "Bride of Lammermoor." It did not detain us long, as our time was far spent, and our energies were nearly exhausted. It served, however, for a text from which Mr. Miller discoursed on the genius of Scott. The great Sir Walter held a very high place in his esteem, and he spoke with the warmest admiration of his unrivalled romances. I noticed that to the last he kept by his quiet and gentle tone, even when his words expressed deep feeling or high enthusiasm. Such is a brief and hitherto unwritten chapter in the life of the admirable Hugh Miller.

J. D.

## WINGED ANTS.

IN the month of August last letters appeared in the London newspapers announcing a sudden plague of winged ants in the metropolis. From Islington and other parts of North London came the tidings that a species of large ant with long wings had been seen coming up in great numbers out of the ground. Similar testimony was received from other suburbs. In the City as well as in the northern and southern environs the scene for several days was a remarkable one. Even on the steamboats clouds of flying ants descended, and along the City portion of the Thames Embankment it was hardly possible to take a step without crushing some of these insect wanderers. The phenomenon was observed to be associated with a continuance of warm and equable autumn weather, a soft haze mellowing the sunlight. Beginning on the 18th, the swarming of these winged ants continued for several days.

The little creatures which caused such a sensation were no foreigners. They occupy, perhaps, the foremost place among the thirty-five or forty indigenous species of ants known in Britain. They were the migratory members (males and females, and not the workers) of the mining species, known as the garden ant or black ant (*formica nigra*), whose nests may be found in nearly every garden in London where the soil is sandy. Leaving their nests to the wingless workers, these winged males and females had left on a marriage journey to new homes. Hiding in the ground throughout the summer, and very seldom coming to the surface until swarming time, winged ants seldom come under the notice of the ordinary observer—hence the surprise of writers to the public journals, who had evidently just seen a winged ant for the first time in their lives.

The month of the annual swarming and migration of the male and female ants varies with the species. Mr. Frederick Smith, of the British Museum, our leading hymenopterist, has given a table of the British species, and their dates of swarming. The wood ant (also known as the horse ant and hill ant) swarms as early as May; another species is as late as October. Mr. Smith gives the end of August as the swarming-time for our London garden ant. This year the migration appears to have been earlier than usual, the season having been dry and favourable.

The winged ants may be seen outside their nests for several days before the migration takes place. The large, milky-white, iridescent wings of the females (double the size of the males) render them conspicuous. These wings are evidently very awk-

ward appendages for an underground life. Hence, as we shall see, they are dispensed with when the migration is over. The ascent will be delayed for days if the wind is high or the weather otherwise unfavourable, for the winged ant lacks the muscular power to direct its flight except on the most tranquil days. At the best of times, whole clouds of them are borne helplessly along, and find a watery grave. The survivors, or at least the females, on descending to a favourable spot, shed their wings, and enter the ground as the founders of new communities.

The annals of these aerial migrations teem with startling accounts of the simultaneous ascents of creatures which, although widely distributed in separate underground communities, agree sufficiently in the date for swarming as to unite in a vast cloud, acres in extent. The panics to which the phenomenon has given rise have in some cases had a humorous aspect. On one occasion an English entomologist, whilst staying at Presburg, heard the alarm given that the cathedral was on fire. The townspeople hurried to the spot, and the fire-engines speedily arrived. The upper part of the tower seemed wrapped in smoke, and every moment the flames were expected to burst out. It turned out, however, that what was thought to be smoke was a hanging cloud of winged ants, whose undulating motion as they swarmed high up around the building had misled the spectators. The mistake caused no little amusement. Our informant says that a few years since there was a similar occurrence at St. Albans.

H. W.

## BORGUND CHURCH, NORWAY.

THE traveller will not find very much that is either beautiful or interesting, from an antiquarian point of view, in the ecclesiastical architecture of Norway. The fantastic wooden churches of Borgund, Hitterdal, and Urnes form, however, remarkable exceptions to this general rule. Of these three, the Church of Borgund, in Loerdal, is, perhaps, on the whole, the most remarkable, and certainly the most ornamental. Borgund is on the high road (northern route) between Christiania and Bergen, and is therefore easily accessible. It could be reached by water from Bergen almost in a day. I, however, made a four days' pilgrimage thither from Christiania. The journey was accomplished by rail to Eidsvold, then by steamer up the beautiful Mjösen Lake as far as Gjövåg. Here carriage travelling begins, and you must drive yourself the rest of the way. Each carriage only accommodates one traveller and a boy, the latter, the Skydsgutt as he is called, hanging on behind the best way he can, in a manner regulated by the length of his legs and the size of the traveller's portmanteau. If you have a good loud voice you can carry on a conversation with the occupant of any carriage which may happen to be before or behind your own; if you have a knowledge of Norsk, you can converse with your Skydsgutt, who will often turn out not an uninteresting companion. If you have neither, you must devote all your attention to the scenery surrounding you; and if you do this, in most parts of Norway, and certainly on the road to Borgund, you will have amply sufficient occupation. I slept at Skoën the first night, in a large room with a bed in each corner, and all of them were occupied by travellers. We

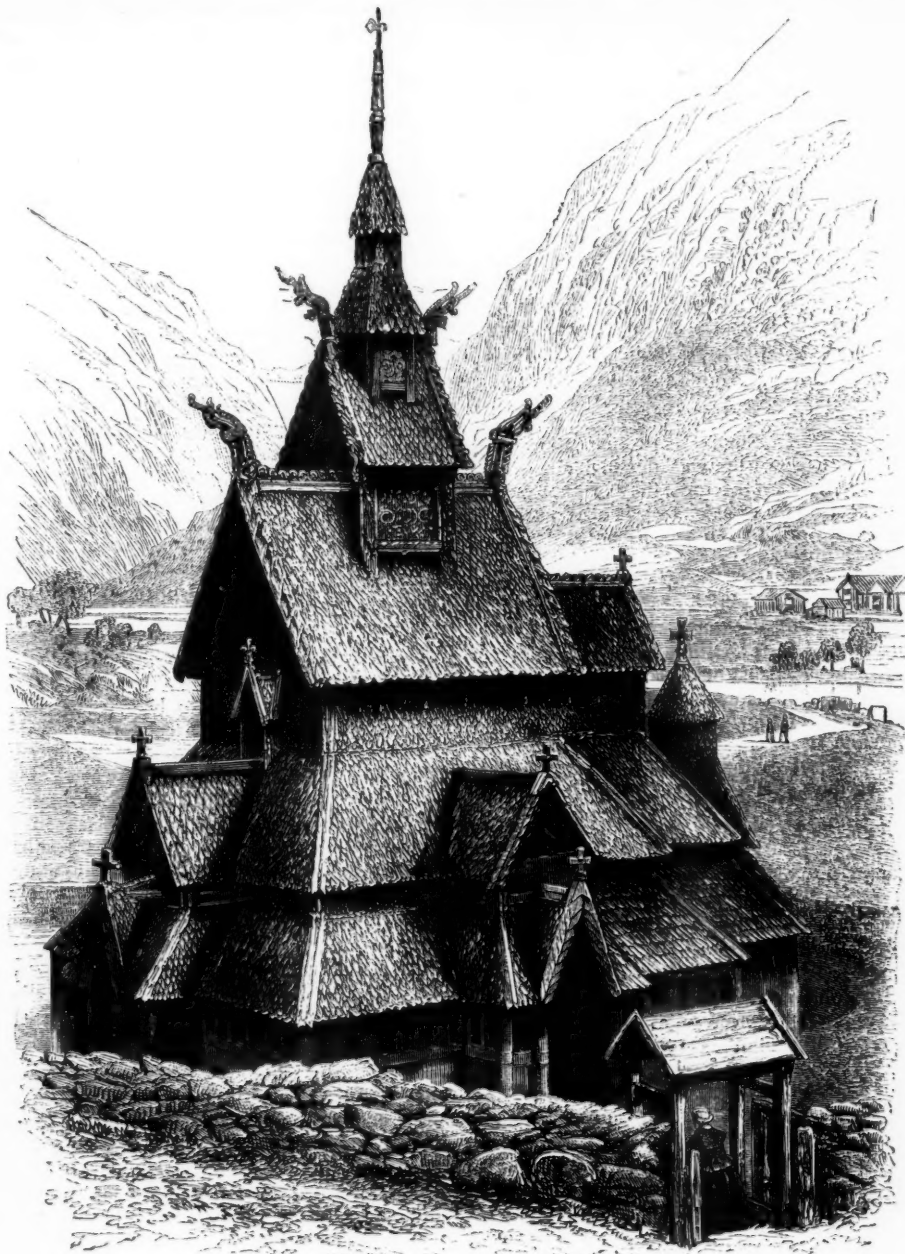
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did not know each other before, and had not been introduced, but we managed to get through the night comfortably notwithstanding. The washing

the water, discovered to his horror, on turning his head to the shore, that the whole population of the neighbouring village had assembled on the bank,



BORGUND CHURCH, NORWAY.

accommodation next morning was of the usual continental soup-plate description; and if any further facilities for ablutions were required, we were referred to the nearest lake. The art of swimming is, however, very little practised among the Norwegians themselves, and there is a story told of one unfortunate Englishman who, having taken to

and were watching him with as much interest and surprise as if he had been the famous sea-serpent, whom the Norwegian sailors so often report as disporting himself about their coasts.

Next day, on leaving Skoën, a drive of about forty miles through magnificent pine forests, past beautiful waterfalls, fine lakes, and lofty mountains,

brought us to Fagernes, on the borders of a noble lake celebrated for the abundance and excellence of its trout. Very simple trout they are. I caught some with a bent pin, partially concealed by a worm; and the ordinary method of capture employed by the people at the inn was to drop a round net into the clear water, and pull it up suddenly when a sufficiently good fish swam over its mouth. A disciple of the gentle art who attempted for the best part of a day during my visit to beguile the trout scientifically with rod and fly, in the approved method, met with no success whatever; he was too clever for these innocent fish.

The next day's drive was a long and a grand one, through some of the finest scenery in Norway; but I cannot stay to describe it. In its course we commenced the ascent of the Fille Fjeld, and closed our journey at Nystuen, a group of a few houses built by the shore of the lonely Utsa Vand, on nearly the most elevated part of the great plateau, about 3,200 feet above the sea. The scenery of the Fille Fjeld is wild in the extreme, and its vegetation very scanty. Formerly tame reindeer were kept at Nystuen, but as the wolves were in the habit of inspecting them more closely in winter than was deemed either safe or pleasant by their proprietors, they are not now to be seen there. It was a curious sight at Nystuen, as the evening wore on, to see the peasants dropping into the great inn kitchen, one after another, and sitting down to supper. A group assembled round a great bowl of milk, into which they first broke a few square yards of fladbrod, and then, all together, ate the mixture with spoons. Others regaled themselves with basins of grød, a sort of porridge, having much the appearance of plaster-of-paris. All appeared impressed with the importance of the occasion, and were solemn and silent till the meal concluded, when they stowed themselves away for the night (clothes and all) on various shelves which lined the sides of the room.

The Loedals Elv has its source in the Fille Fjeld, and, assuming in its course every picturesque form possible for a river to take, is the traveller's companion for the rest of his journey.

About twenty miles from Nystuen, on the other side of the Fjeld, we saw down to the right of the road a strange-looking edifice rising from the valley. This was Borgund Church, of which we were in search. It appeared to me more like a Chinese pagoda in mourning than anything else; but my readers can make their own comparisons, as the picture which is before them very accurately represents it. The internal arrangement of the church consists of an oblong quadrangular nave thirty-nine feet in length, a somewhat more narrow choir, and a small semicircular apse; whilst a low covered way, about three feet wide, runs round the exterior of the church. There are very few windows, and the interior is consequently very dark. The material of which the sacred edifice is constructed is Norwegian pine, covered over with coats of pitch. The beams which form the walls do not lie horizontally, but stand perpendicularly. Borgund Church has not escaped the attention of Mr. James Fergusson, the eminent architect, and he devotes some interesting pages to its description.\* He says: "All the doorways and principal openings are carved with elaborate ornaments, representing entwined dragons fighting and

biting each other, intermixed occasionally with foliage and figures. This style of carving is found on crosses and tombstones, not only in Scandinavia, but in Scotland and Ireland. It is only known to exist in the original wood in these singular churches"—i.e., Borgund, Hitterdal, and Urnes. And again: "There can be no doubt about the age of these curious edifices, for not only does the dragon tracing fix them to the eleventh or twelfth century, but the capitals of the pillars and general character of the mouldings exactly correspond with the details of our own Norman architecture so far as the difference of materials permits. It is more like a Chinese pagoda or some strange creation of the South Sea Islanders than the sober production of the same people who built the bold and massive round Gothic edifice of the same age."

This quaint wooden church is thus, it appears, almost coeval with Christianity in Norway, for it was only in the middle of the tenth century that Hako the Good, who had been brought up in England at the court of Athelstane, attempted to introduce Christianity into Norway, and being suspected of unfaithfulness to the national religion, was compelled by his nobles to drink horse broth in honour of Odin. This seems a peculiar test of orthodoxy, but it appears to have been an effectual one, for we find the eating of horse-flesh as connected with the ancient idolatry one of the principal practices against which the monks and early missionaries to Scandinavia launched their fulminations (*vide* "Hako the Good's Saga").

Possibly Borgund Church was built by Olaf (Olave) II, who commenced to reign in 1016. Olaf propagated what he imagined to be Christianity with fire and sword, and was more celebrated for his crimes than his piety. When his subjects could put up with him no longer, Canute the Great was elected king in his room. Olaf, having fled into Sweden, some time after invaded Norway and was slain in battle by his successor. His body some years subsequently having been found in a remarkable state of preservation, the Romish Church, with its usual sagacity, discovered that a miracle had taken place, and Olaf II became Saint Olaf. As it does not appear to have been thought desirable to leave the future preservation of his body to miracle it was buried, and Trondhjem Cathedral arose over his grave. Troops of pilgrims from all parts of Europe came thither to worship at St. Olaf's shrine, and churches were dedicated to him in England and even in Constantinople. Since the Reformation, however, the saint's reputation has declined, and his miraculously-preserved body having been removed in 1568 from its ancient shrine into the body of the cathedral, has lost its attractive power. Possibly few even of the inhabitants of the various parishes in the City of London, the churches of which are dedicated to St. Olave, are acquainted with the interesting particulars connected with the early history of the "saint."

Sigurd I led his celebrated expedition to the Holy Land in 1107 from the neighbourhood of Borgund. The memories of the exploits of these crusaders still linger among their descendants on the borders of the Sogne Fjord hard by, and it seems more than probable that whilst some of these sturdy warriors rest in the distant Holy Land, under the walls of Sidon, which they took, or even in Jerusalem itself, others who returned home have reposed these seven hundred years under the shadow of this venerable

\* "History of Architecture," by James Fergusson, F.R.

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church, succeeding generations of peaceful peasants little dreaming, as they trooped to worship there Sabbath after Sabbath, that

"Every sod beneath their feet should be a soldier's sepulchre."

Divine service is no longer held in the old church, but in a new one which has been erected in its immediate neighbourhood. There is a small model of Borgund Church in the South Kensington Museum, and the original seems to have had a narrow escape from making its appearance there, too, or in some similar receptacle for curiosities, as it is reported in Norway that an Englishman lately made an offer to purchase the church from the local authorities for a considerable sum of money. Happily the proposition was not favourably received, and all who take any interest in the preservation of such interesting antiquities will rejoice to hear that the Norwegian Antiquarian Society has taken the old church under its care, and is doing its best to protect it both from damage by bad weather and from the decay resulting from extreme old age.\*

The Norwegian church-builders of the middle ages understood well their business, and their handiwork, notwithstanding the perishable nature of the materials they were compelled to use, has come down to us, strange as it may appear, almost as perfect as those marvels of Norman architecture, so many of which are the pride and the ornament of our own land. These latter may appear at first sight more worthy of admiration, but when we consider that the wooden churches of Norway have weathered the storms of seven hundred northern winters and yet stand firm, their dragon carvings still sharp and well defined, their pinnacles neither crumbling nor fallen, we cannot fail to feel the deepest anxiety for their continued preservation. We earnestly hope that they may long remain objects of interest to the antiquarian, to the student of history, and, indeed, to all who cherish the links which bind us to the past.

R. W. D.

## ON BOX AND OTHER WOODS USED FOR ENGRAVING.

BY JOHN R. JACKSON, A.L.S., CURATOR OF THE KEW MUSEUM.

**BOXWOOD**, as most of our readers are aware, is the principal wood used for wood engraving. When we consider the immense number of illustrated periodicals and books that issue from the press, not only in England, but on the continent and in America, together with the various other uses to which boxwood is put, it is a matter of surprise whence it all comes.

The box is at the present time widely distributed through Europe and Asia, being found abundantly in Italy, Spain, Southern France, and on the coast of the Black Sea, as well as in China, Japan, Northern India, and Persia. In this country it is found on the chalk hills of Kent, Surrey, Bucks, and Gloucester, but is considered to be truly indigenous only on Box Hill, one of the lofty range of hills forming the North Downs, near Dorking. Though this last-named beautiful spot is about the only one in England where we may now see it flourishing in dense masses, it is certain that it once grew in abun-

dance at Boxwell, in Gloucestershire, Boxley, in Kent, and several other places with similar names.

The box trees on Box Hill, and the natural beauties of the neighbouring village of Mickleham, which is certainly one of the prettiest spots in England, seem to have attracted the attention of Evelyn, for he writes under date July 27, 1655:—"I went to Box Hill to see those rare natural bowers, cabinets, and shady walks in the box copses. . . . At Mickleham there are goodly walks, and hills shaded with yew and box, as render the place extremely agreeable, it seeming from these evergreens to be summer all the winter." Other old English writers, as Chaucer, Gerarde, Parkinson, Turner, and John Ray, all refer to the box, either as giving effect to the landscape or with regard to its uses.

Boughs or sprigs of box were in olden times regularly used at Whitsuntide for filling the large open fireplaces, many of which are still to be seen in old country houses. It was also used on Palm Sunday instead of the willow, which now does duty for, and is in fact called, palm in many parts of the country. Another old custom which still prevails in some rural districts is for each mourner at a funeral to carry a sprig of box in his hand, and finally to cast it into the grave. At the present time box is used equally with holly and other evergreens for decorations at Christmas.

That boxwood was used in very early times for some of the purposes to which we now put it is evident, for Virgil and others of the old writers refer to its use for inlaying with ivory, as well as "for the turner's trade." It was also highly prized for musical instruments.

English-grown boxwood, even that from Box Hill, is of such slender growth that it is almost useless for commercial purposes, though it is stated that a number of trees cut down in that locality in 1815 realised upwards of £10,000, the wood being chiefly used for turning. Besides the smallness of the wood, the quality is not equal to that of foreign growth.

The demand in England is now met chiefly by the produce of Circassia, the bulk being shipped at Poti, a port on the south-east coast of the Black Sea. A small proportion, however, comes from Trebizonde and one or two little villages on the east of the Black Sea near Poti. The trees grow in large forests on the mountains in certain districts ranging from 30 to 180 miles inland. Though some of the old forests on the Circassian coast are open for trade, the largest forests are in the hands of the Russian Government, and remain closed. It is from this fact, together with the increased cost of cutting the wood farther inland and conveying it to the coast, that the advance in the price of boxwood is to be attributed, and though these advanced prices may still be obtained, it is not impossible that before long wood may be procured from the neighbourhood of the Caspian Sea, being brought down the Volga and Don for shipment at the port of Taganrog. In a report on the trade of Soukoum Kale in 1862, the British consul estimated that, taking the then average rate of export of boxwood, the Abkhasian supply would not last more than sixty years, twelve years of which have now passed. After the wood is cut in the forest, it is brought down on horseback to the nearest river, put on board flat-bottom boats, and floated down to the port for shipment. It arrives in this country either at the ports of Liver-

\* I am indebted for this information, and for many other interesting particulars concerning Borgund Church, to Pastor Horro of Christiania.



pool or London, and is usually in blocks or logs about four feet long and eight to ten inches across.

The uses of boxwood, as we have hinted, are very numerous, but its chief application is for making shuttles and a variety of other purposes in cotton, woollen, and flax spinning machinery, also for croquet mallets and balls, which alone take as much as wood engraving. A large quantity is likewise used for military fife, both here and abroad, and amongst minor uses are rule and mathematical instruments, "chucks" for tuning, buttons, medical bottle cases, chess, draughts, beads for Roman Catholic rosaries; and formerly some 200 tons a year were used for plugs at the base of Minie rifle bullets. Umbrella handles are also sometimes made from boxwood, as it is the most suitable wood for carving; and latterly small quantities of young box saplings have been imported from Algeria for the manufacture of walking-sticks, but they are mostly too crooked to be of much use. It has been thought by many persons, and not without some reason, that considering the immense quantity of wood engravings now issued, the consumption of boxwood alone for that purpose must form a considerable item in the annual imports, but when we state that it is estimated that the annual consumption of boxwood for wood engraving does not exceed 100, or from that to 150, or at most 200 tons, out of a total of 6,000 or 8,000 tons, it will be seen that though wood engraving takes the best quality, it does not by a very long way take the largest quantity. The following table shows the total annual imports of boxwood into England since 1869:—

1869	.	.	.	5,304 tons.
1870	.	.	.	4,598 "
1871	.	.	.	4,868 "
1872	.	.	.	8,507 "

The price of boxwood of course varies both on the score of quality and likewise in regard to the state of the markets, but the average value may perhaps be taken at about £11 per ton. After the voyage and delivery of the wood in London, it loses about a sixth of its weight in drying.

The preparation of boxwood blocks for engraving purposes is a special trade in the hands of very few persons, and is centred in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street. For making these blocks the wood is first carefully selected, and then cut up into transverse slices about an inch thick. This is done by circular saws, which are necessarily very rigid, so as to ensure good even cuts. The saws are consequently somewhat thick, so that, taking into account the numerous cuts in one block, the quantity of sawdust produced and the waste pieces at the ends, the log again loses about one-fifth of its bulk.

After being cut, the slices are placed in racks something like plate-racks, and thoroughly seasoned by slow degrees in gradually heated rooms. When sufficiently seasoned they are reduced to parallelograms of various sizes, the outer portion of the circular section near the bark being cut away, and all defective wood rejected—such, for instance, as knots, irregular grain, as that resulting from the position of branches, which are indicated by light-coloured markings in the wood, known in the trade as "comets," from their resemblance in shape to those fiery bodies. They are softer than the surrounding wood, and consequently do not cut well with the graver; therefore much care and a practised eye is

needed in selecting suitable wood. A section of boxwood almost always exhibits parts of widely different values; the more so as it deviates from the circle in form, for then the annual rings are compressed, and consequently closer on one side than on the other, the side with the wide open rings being usually far inferior in value to the denser and smaller side.

From these remarks it will be seen that in the preparation of engravers' blocks there is a vast quantity of waste wood, which at the present time is put to no use whatever, but is simply consigned to the furnace, where it makes an excellent heat-giving but certainly costly fuel. Prepared blocks of good box fetch about one penny per square inch, and the very best quality as much as fivepence per square inch.

In former times, engravers' blocks were cut parallel with the grain, the present system of cutting them across the grain being introduced about the middle of the last century. In the preparation of a block—say for a newspaper plate, the parallelograms before spoken of are assorted as to size and fitted together at the back by brass bolts and nuts. So accurately do the edges of the wood fit together, that after the artist has finished his drawing on the smooth face of this compound block, the screws and bolts are loosened, and the pieces separated and given perhaps to several engravers for their individual manipulation, all that is needed after they have finished their work being to fit the pieces together and screw them up again, when they form one engraved block ready for the printing-press. In such a way are the large double and quadruple page engravings of our illustrated papers produced, and in such a way a block of almost any size can be prepared. The largest the writer ever saw was prepared by Messrs. Wells and Son, of Bouverie Street, and contained one hundred and fifty-nine distinct pieces, so that, if necessary, after being drawn upon by the artist, one hundred and fifty-nine engravers could work upon it at the same time. For smaller pictures the segments are mostly mortised together with pieces of mahogany.

It is on account of its remarkably close and even grain that boxwood is preferred before all others for wood engraving; it is firmer, and admits of finer and sharper lines than any other material yet discovered, though experiments have been made with many different woods. Amongst the best known may be mentioned pear, hornbeam, and Spanish mahogany. The first has an even, close grain, and though not so hard as box, it is said to be pleasant to work upon. Hornbeam has been used to some extent, and ranks next to pear in quality; Spanish mahogany is inferior to both, but it has been used for large coarse subjects.

Amongst European woods, lime, sycamore, and even pine are occasionally used for "posters," but the woods used are cut longitudinally, and not across the grain as in box. Some Australian woods have recently been tried in this country by Mr. Worthington G. Smith, and a report on them furnished by him in the "Gardeners' Chronicle."

The first wood experimented upon was that of *Elæodendrum australe*, a tree of New South Wales, growing to a height of from thirty to forty feet, with a diameter of eight to fourteen inches, the wood of which is used in the colony for turning and cabinet work. For engraving purposes it seems suitable only for rough work, such as diagrams and

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posters. Mr. Smith says common yew is similar in character to this wood, "which, though very close-grained, is softer and tougher than box, and resists and blunts the tools. It takes longer to engrave on these woods, and the outlines are very liable to chip off when engraved." *Pittosporum undulatum*, another New South Wales wood, is said to be fit only for bold outlines. In comparison with box it is soft and tough, and requires more force to cut it. The toughness of the wood causes the tools to drag back, so that great care is required in cutting to prevent the lines chipping. The wood of *Bursaria spinosa*, a tree belonging to the same natural order as the last-named, is reported to be equal to common or inferior box, and would perhaps be suitable for common subjects. In working it, however, the edges and points of the tools are much blunted. Some of the woods—as, for instance, those of *Monotoca elliptica* and *Pittosporum bicolor*—require considerable retouching after the engraving is complete.

The wood of several species of the genus *Tecoma*, tall trees growing in tropical America and the West Indies, is very hard and even-grained; that of *T. pentaphylla*, it is said, would probably prove equal to good box, but like those just enumerated, they are not at present in the market.

The final opinion with regard to these woods for engraving purposes, is this, that if they could be imported, prepared, and sold for a farthing, or less than a halfpenny a square inch, they would meet with a sale for some classes of work.

In North America several kinds of wood have been favourably reported upon, as that of a species of rhododendron, *R. maximum*; also *Kalmia latifolia*; a kind of holly (*Ilex opaca*); the dogwood (*Cornus florida*), and others. These are all hard, close-grained woods, but we are not aware whether they have ever been tried in this country.

What is really required is a good, sound, even, close-grained, and hard wood, with the annual rings and medullary rays so small and compacted together that they shall be of the same even texture throughout, so as to allow the graver to pass through them without being led off in the direction in which they run, or weakening the fine delicate lines so essential to the beauty of an engraving. All these qualities are combined in good box, and up to the present time no efficient substitute has been discovered. Though light-coloured woods are usually selected, the colour is of little or no consequence, as the surface is always whitened for the artist to work upon.

The blocks of Australian woods before referred to were prepared by Mr. R. J. Scott, of Whitefriars-street, who has taken much interest in this subject, and who has since prepared some blocks of true ebony (*Diospyros ebenum*) and green ebony (*Brya ebenus*), the first of which Mr. Smith considers nearly as good as box, and the latter equal to bad box. To Mr. Scott, as well as to Mr. Wells, I am indebted for much information contained in this paper.

#### ASHVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA.

A LADY correspondent of the "Daily News," having spent a year at Ashville, in North Carolina, has given a most interesting account of the town and its people. The place was chosen as a last

resort in the dangerous illness of the lady's husband,—hopeless pulmonary consumption, in fact, if the medical opinions were trustworthy. Having heard of Ashville as a place of resort for such patients in America, the whole family migrated thither. Some difficulties and fatigues were encountered on the road, but the object of the journey and year's residence was attained. Ashville is on the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, at an elevation of about 2,000 feet above the sea-level. The scenery is magnificent, and the air is peculiarly dry and bracing. Among the recollections of the town, one of the most gratifying is the record of friendly feeling towards "the old country."

"Soon after we arrived at Ashville all the principal people called upon us. Our very first visitor was the Episcopal Bishop of North Carolina, Bishop Atkinson, a splendid-looking elderly man of the very highest Old English type of face and figure, and the most benignant countenance. We had excellent letters of introduction to many gentlemen in the Southern States, but had none whatever to Ashville, and yet we were received with the utmost confidence and kindness. We have all heard occasionally in American writings of people of the Old Dominion School, and I, for one, never clearly understood what it meant till I was in Ashville. It seems that when America successfully revolted from English rule, many, especially Virginians of good English birth, retained their attachment to English rule, and considered the founding a republic as a great mistake, and they were called of the Old Dominion School; and we were much surprised to find that something of this feeling exists even now here and there in the South, especially since their Northern conquest. We found in that remote place people far better acquainted with English politics and the movements and combinations of English political parties than we were ourselves. We also met with the most staunch, old-fashioned, loud-responding Sir Roger de Coverley and Dr. Johnson stamp of Church of England men. It was refreshing to hear the out-and-out Toryism of our dear friend the General, and how he mourned over our increase of the franchise in England. This gentleman had been originally in high command in the United States army, and had lost his right arm while a major in command in Mexico more than twenty years ago. Being a Virginian, and thinking they had the right on their side, he had embraced the cause of the South, and with its loss he had lost his fortune, and late in life he had become a lawyer, and, what everybody else is there more or less, a farmer also. His wife is a Northern lady, and it was interesting to me to find how intimately she was acquainted with European courts and their inter-marriages. She had been a good deal in Europe herself, and her father and brothers had been consuls in Paris and St. Petersburg. The extreme cheapness of land and provisions\* had induced several gentlemen whose fortunes had been diminished by the war to settle in Ashville. There were also several English and Irish gentlemen who had tried Canada, but had been driven by the severity and length of the Canadian winters to try their fortunes in the South.

\* The price of beef is or was from 2½d. to 3d. per lb.; young turkeys at 2s. and large ones at 3s.; hares and partridges, 4d.; and chickens, 7½d. each. With flour, potatoes, grapes, peaches, and strawberries all exceedingly cheap, and good wine a dollar a gallon, it may well be understood that, notwithstanding the dearness of house rent, £200 a year will go as far as £400 in England.

One was mica-mining, one was a doctor, and another tobacco-growing. If properly attended to, we understand tobacco-growing is very profitable there, as the climate and soil are very favourable; but very often the whole crop is destroyed by being left, in the hope of its growing a little longer, until an early frost, which will utterly destroy it. We could have bought a house with eight or ten large rooms, and servants' houses, barns, stables, gardens, etc., and splendidly situated, for a thousand pounds, and farther out in the country for still less; and they will all double in value as soon as ever the rail communication is complete. In this small community of about two thousand inhabitants, there were about eight regular medical men, and fourteen or fifteen lawyers, and many churches and chapels with their ministers. The people are generally extremely English-looking, much more so than many of the Northerners, and they have the kindest feelings towards the English generally. Some of the ladies are very pretty, and the young ladies dress with considerable taste, but in a few years after they marry they seem to adopt a very plain style of dress, and generally to place themselves a good deal in the background of the unmarried people. The great number of lawyers puzzled us, but we found that, Ashville being a county town, there was a very great deal of land business to be transacted, especially in collecting the taxes; and as a good deal of land was bought from the Government, and paid for by instalments, and lawyers seemed to be land surveyors also, there was work enough for all. Where the population is so very thin there are tracts of land here and there unowned and unsurveyed, and some of these lawyers buy up these lands for less than a dollar an acre."

In commenting upon the letter the editor says: "The letter of our correspondent exhibits North Carolina in a state of transition. The people have too much good sense not to right themselves ultimately. The old people described in this letter will not guide the fortunes of the State, and their sentimental talk will not hinder the progress of events one hour. As soon as the Southern communities admit that they have to adjust themselves to their new circumstances, they will begin to feel the return of prosperity, and this they are doing. A very matter-of-fact kind of lady from Georgia whom our correspondent encountered told her that for a year or two after the emancipation of the slaves she and her husband believed themselves ruined, but that after they had got back to work they found it very much cheaper to be able to hire such good strong labourers as they now had than to have to support a crowd of slaves, including children and aged and sick and disabled men and women. The fair Georgian insisted that she and her husband had been deprived of their human 'property' most unjustly, yet admitted that they were doing much better under the new and free system than under the old. Now that slavery is gone, even at the South, nobody has a good word for it. Our correspondent talked a good deal about it with the people:—'They all thought it a bad system, but they had found it, and had grown up with it, and it had been left them by the English, and therefore they had not been entirely responsible for it.' This is the best way of putting the case, and if everybody had spoken like this between 1850 and 1860 there would have been no war of Secession. Our correspondent was told that they find it difficult to

adjust their relations with the emancipated negroes, but this was to be expected, and the difficulty will continue until both classes learn that each is indispensable to the other."

### THE GREAT BELL OF ST. PAUL'S.

THERE was a famous bell originally cast in the reign of Edward I, and hung at Westminster Hall to notify the hour to the judges. It was first called "Edward of Westminster," and afterwards "Westminster Tom." William III gave this bell to the Cathedral of St. Paul, whither it was brought on New Year's Day, 1699, and recast, with additional metal. The hour is struck on the bell by a large hammer, which is drawn up by a wire in the clockwork, and falls on the outside brim of the bell by its own weight. The clapper, which weighs only 180 lb., is only used to toll on the death of one of the royal family, or of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, the Dean of St. Paul's, or the Lord Mayor.

According to some authorities, the name of the Westminster bell was "Edward," after the royal Confessor. Subsequently to the time of Henry VIII, as appears by two lines in Eccles's glee, it was called "Great Tom," as Gough conjectures, by a corruption of "Grand Ton," from its deep sonorous tone. It was on August 1, 1698, the clochard or clock-tower was granted by William III to St. Margaret's parish, and was taken down, when the bell was found to weigh 82 cwt. 2 qrs. 21 lb., at the price of 10*d.* per pound, producing £385 17*s.* 6*d.*, for St. Paul's. While being conveyed over the boundary of Westminster, under Temple Bar it fell from the carriage. It stood under a shed in the cathedral yard for some years, and was at length recast, with additional metal, the inscription stating it to have been "brought from the ruins of Westminster." "The key-note (tonic) or sound of this bell is A flat (perhaps it was A natural, agreeably to the pitch at the time it was cast), but the sound heard at the greatest distance is that of E flat, or a fifth above the key-note; and a musical ear, when close by, can perceive several harmonic sounds."—(*W. Parry.*) The same hammer which strikes the hours has always been used to toll the bell on the occasion of a demise, but the sound produced on the latter occasion is not so loud as when the hour is struck, in consequence of the heavy clock-weight not being attached when the bell is tolled, and causing the hammer to strike with greater force than by manual strength.

Mr. Thomas Waterby, the well-known collector of works of art, and who takes a special interest in campanology, has corrected some popular mis-statements respecting St. Paul's great bell. It has been stated, over and over again, by numerous writers, from about the middle of the last century down to the present day, that the diameter of the great bell of St. Paul's is 10 ft.; whereas it is only 6 ft. 9½ in. We are further told that the bell was cast in 1716, and that its weight is 11,474 lb. The fact is, it was made in 1709, its weight being 11,648 lb., or 5 tons 4 cwt.; and it bears the following inscription: "Richard Phelps made me, 1709."

Many readers will remember the story about the sentinel on duty at Windsor Castle, who declared

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St Paul's clock struck *thirteen* instead of twelve times at midnight, in order to prove that he could not have been guilty of sleeping upon his post, as he was accused by the guard who relieved him after the due time. The circumstance is thus recorded in a newspaper of the 22nd of June, 1770 :—

"Mr. John Hatfield, who died last Monday, at his house in Glasshouse Yard, Aldersgate, aged 102 years, was a soldier in the reign of William and Mary, and the person who was tried and condemned by a court-martial for falling asleep on his duty upon the terrace at Windsor. He absolutely denied the charge against him, and solemnly declared that he heard St. Paul's clock strike thirteen; the truth of which was much doubted by the court, because of the great distance. But whilst he was under sentence of death, an affidavit was made by several persons that the clock actually did strike thirteen instead of twelve; whereupon he received his Majesty's pardon. The above his friends caused to be engraved on his plate, to satisfy the world of the truth of a story which has been much doubted, though he had often confirmed it to many gentlemen, and a few days before his death told it to several of his neighbours. He enjoyed his sight and memory to the day of his death."

The clock striking *thirteen* instead of *twelve* is mechanically possible, and may have been caused by the lifting-piece holding on too long.

It is rather against the truth of the story that St. Paul's had no very great bell before 1709. The bell at Westminster clock-tower, afterwards recast for St. Paul's, may have been the one intended. It adds to the doubtfulness of the story that a similar legend had existed at an earlier date.

Before the time of the present St. Paul's, and as long ago as the reign of Henry VII, there is on record a story of a young girl, who, going to confess, was insulted by the priest then on his turn there for the purpose of confession in the building; and, quickly escaping from him up the stairs of the great clock-tower, raised the clapper or hammer of the bell of the clock just as it had finished striking twelve, and, by means of the roof, eluded her assailant and got away. On accusing him as soon as she reached her friends and home, she called attention to the fact of the clock having struck thirteen that time; and on those in the immediate neighbourhood of the cathedral being asked if so unusual a thing had been heard, they said it was so. This proved the story, and the ecclesiastic was degraded. We may smile at the improbability, but the acceptance of the story shows what was the popular feeling as to the priests of the time, and the practice of confession.

The new "Great Tom" of Lincoln, cast in 1834, is 6 cwt. heavier than the great bell of St. Paul's. Its tone is generally considered to be about the same as that of St. Paul's, but sweeter and softer. Mr. E. B. Denison, however, thinks "St. Paul's far the best of the four large bells of England, though it is the smallest of them, being about 5 tons; while York is 12, Lincoln 5½, Oxford 7½, which last is a remarkably bad bell."—"Treatise on Clock and Watchmaking," Weale, 1850.)

It is scarcely correct to say that the present bell of St. Paul's was cast "out of the metal of 'Great Tom' of Westminster." That bell was subsequently cracked, and then recast by Philip Wightman; but it proved so faulty that Richard Phelps was employed to make

one of *new* metal; and this bell, on which the clock now strikes the hour, was delivered at the cathedral before Wightman's bell was removed from that edifice. (See Sir Christopher Wren's "Answer to a Pamphlet entitled 'Frauds and Abuses at St. Paul's,'" 1712. See also "Facts against Scandal," London, 1713.)

## Varieties.

**CREMATION.**—As an historical fact, the following is worth preserving, on the authority of the "Times":—"The body of Lady Dilke, who died in London, was burned five weeks after at Dresden. The ceremony was performed in the furnace recently invented for burial purposes by Herr Siemens, and the relatives of the deceased lady permitting strangers to be present, a large number of scientific men attended the experiment. When the company had complied with Herr Siemens's request to offer up a mental prayer, the coffin was placed in the chamber of the furnace; six minutes later the coffin burst; five minutes more the flesh began to melt away; ten minutes more and the skeleton was laid bare; another ten minutes and the bones began to crumble. Seventy-five minutes after the introduction of the coffin into the furnace all that remained of Lady Dilke and the coffin was 6 lb. of dust, placed in an urn. The brother-in-law of the deceased was present." Sir Charles Dilke has stated that the cremation was by Lady Dilke's express wish, and against his own desire; also that the coffin was open so as to admit of inspection, by police regulations.

**SINGING FISH.**—If an oyster can whistle there is really no reason in the nature of things why a fish should not sing; and it now seems that there are some fishes—in American waters, of course—that actually do sing. A learned Transatlantic naturalist, who has of late bestowed considerable attention upon the habits of the so-called bearded drum-fish, is convinced that it has the power of uttering a distinctly audible note. "Strange sounds," says this gentleman in a letter to the "New York Times," "are often heard rising from the waters of our coasts that would be apt to astonish the superstitious listener if he were not acquainted with the unoffending cause of all the disturbance. Sometimes it rises in the air like the bang of a huge drum, and again seems to steal over the waves with a low murmuring wail; and if you were to place your ear close to the surface, the strange sounds would appear to come from five or six different places. Seamen are often startled by the 'boom, boom' that seems to steal over the vessel, seeming to their ears more like the drum of some long-lost crew than the voice of an insignificant member of the family of fishes." The musical animal is, it seems, a large species of ray which, by some means at present unknown, has a power of producing those extraordinary sounds. The sharp, shrill note of the cicada, and of other insects of the grasshopper tribe, is produced by smartly rubbing together the horny wing-cases that cover in the true wings; and it is probable that the booming note of the bearded drum-fish is produced in some similar way by the large fins with which the creature is fringed. Other denizens of the water have vocal powers equally remarkable. The common red gurnet, so frequent on the Devonshire coast, utters an audible squeak of expostulation when it is taken from the water, and Devonshire fishermen call it in consequence the cuckoo fish. The noisy malgre, which is caught along the whole eastern line of the American coast, makes a strange cooing moan, accompanied by a sharp croak like that of a frog. These sounds can be heard on the surface when the fish itself is a hundred and fifty feet below, and are probably produced in some way by the large pectoral fins that lie on each side of its head. Lastly, in the Gulf of Mexico is to be caught a fish known as the "grunt," which is not only capable of lifting up its voice, but of actually using it and modulating it so as to express various shades of feeling and emotion. The gentleman from whom we have already quoted declares that when the "grunt" is caught and pulled into the boat its cries at the sight of a knife fairly rise to a shriek; and that, when dying, its moans and sobs are painfully human. "I shall never forget," he tells us, "the first one of these veritable 'porkers' that I caught." No sooner, it seems, was the fish fairly brought to hook than he commenced a series of sobs so pitiful and heartrending that the tender feelings of the fisherman triumphed over the instinct of sport. He could not find it in his heart to kill a creature that begged so piteously for its life. "My better nature was

aroused, and I made haste to toss him back, and as he disappeared he uttered a squeak which, together with the splash, sounded to me like a *bona-fide* 'Thank you,' and I have no doubt but what it was."—*Daily Telegraph*.

**SUSSEX ANCHOR-HOOK.**—The "Gardener's Chronicle" describes a new and useful garden tool, invented by Mr. Harry Hodson, of Hayward's Heath, Sussex. "It is in shape somewhat like an anchor, forming on occasion a powerful lever. The two arms are forked at the ends; one of them is tapered in order to enable it easily to penetrate hard ground; the other is made the reverse way, being widest at the points, so that when the tapered end is not found of sufficient grasp it can be withdrawn and the wide points inserted to extract the root, which may be quicker and neater done than by any other method. Under one of the arms and extending along the shank is an angular knife for cutting brambles and trimming hedges, whilst the under part of the opposite arm and along the shank is left plain to act as a hitch in climbing and to aid in reaching fruit or flowers without injury to the branches. At the extremity of the shank is a projecting blade or spud of curved or tapered form, with a hole at the base to relieve sticky soil, and for the purpose of hanging the implement up when not in use. The great advantage of the tapered spud is that a weed or plant can be cut up without disturbing or damaging adjacent vegetation, as is often done with ordinary weeding spuds. The curved blade may be used as a Dutch hoe and for edging grass plots." Mr. Hodson has also invented a "lady's weed hook," which is a great improvement on the common spud, and is specially useful for croquet grounds and other pet plots of grass.

**LOST PROPERTY.**—The variety of goods that go astray on the railways through carelessness or misdirection was curiously illustrated in the last annual sale of the Midland Railway Company. The announcement of the sale was made in the following terms: "Annual sale of damaged and unclaimed property and salvage. A valuable assortment of miscellaneous goods, including about 150 tons of pig iron, several tons of steel and bar iron, a large quantity of leather, paper, drapery, unclaimed passengers' luggage, parcels, etc." But this advertisement would scarcely prepare the reader for the contents of the catalogues. The sale extended over nine days. There were in all about 1,400 lots of truly miscellaneous goods. One of the first items which attracted our attention on glancing at the catalogue was Lot 179—a balloon and car. Further down the list was Lot 523, 130 magnets; Lot 576, 1,400 fish-hooks, 12 sand-glasses, and a parcel of locks. Examining the list a little more carefully, we found, among merchandise of almost every description, 6 sewing-machines, 12 coal vases, 15 perambulators, 34 dozen galvanised buckets, 15 dozen paraffin lamps, 24 roasting jacks, a large number of iron bedsteads, casks of oil, vinegar, beer, cider, paint, trawls, etc. In the passengers' lost luggage department there were 68 muffs, 11 bundles of coats and trousers, 6 dozen baskets, 14 children's hats, 124 hats and bonnets. Lot 71 included 104 articles of underclothing. Umbrellas, which are apt to be lost, were represented by 456 made of alpaca, and a similar number made of silk, sold in lots of 1 dozen each. Of walking-sticks there were 13 dozen; 71 purses, 55 pairs of spectacles, 39 pipes, and 24 tobacco pouches. In the parcels department there were, among a number of articles too numerous to mention, two new brass-inlaid crucifixes and an incense-burner. In the drapery department an assortment, ready-made and otherwise, sufficiently numerous and varied to provide a dozen shops with a good stock-in-trade. Not the least remarkable feature of the sale was the number of boots and shoes to be disposed of; there were in all 413 pairs. Having arrived at the ninth day, the business concluded with the sale, among other things, of a case of still hock, 1 case of mountain wine, several lots of whisky, brandy, gin, and 16 boxes of cigars. That one railway company should have accumulated in twelve months such a vast quantity of property naturally suggests a variety of considerations as to the cause of such a state of things. It is difficult to come to any other conclusion than that there are weak points somewhere in connection with the conveyance of goods by railway. In the case of passengers' luggage the loss of so many articles is to some extent, no doubt, attributable to want of care on the part of passengers themselves. It should be added that the company have had to pay in the shape of claims for a considerable portion of the goods, so that the proceeds of the sale did not represent all profit.

**INDIAN CORN AS A WINDOW PLANT.**—The "Garden" recommends maize as a window or balcony plant. It says:—"Maize or Indian corn has much to recommend it to the notice of window gardeners, being easily grown and readily propa-

gated. Its appearance is quite distinct from that of anything else in the way of window plants, and it will make a luxuriant growth even in the most smoky and densely-populated parts of London. If sown on a genial hotbed in February, and potted on in rich, well-manured compost, young plants of it will be strong and vigorous, and ready to place on a balcony or outside the window in May. As a central plant for a hanging-basket or rustic stand, maize is equal to a dracena in grace and beauty of outline, besides being much more hardy. It grows from two to three feet high, and its fresh green wavy leaves hang gracefully over the sides of the pots in which it is grown, and do much towards adding variety of outline to the most formal arrangement. There is a variegated variety, the foliage of which is profusely striped with creamy white. This is an effective addition to the centres of vases in which bedding geraniums, nasturtiums, and lobelias are planted during the summer months."

**SIR CHARLES NAPIER MEETING HIS OLD REGIMENT.**—While at Lahore in 1846, Sir Charles Napier joined the Governor-General, having been summoned from Scinde to take Lord Hardinge's place as second in command of the army; and shortly after his arrival a review of the troops was ordered in his honour. Lord Hardinge, Lord Gough, and Sir Charles rode along the line, receiving the salutes of the different corps as they passed. When the Governor-General came opposite the 50th Regiment, which formed part of Sir Harry Smith's division, and had been conspicuous for its dash in all four battles in the Sikh war, and was consequently reduced to half its strength, with very few officers surviving, Lord Hardinge stopped and called out, "Fiftieth, here is your old colonel," pointing to Sir Charles, "who led you at Corunna, and was desperately wounded at your head." The regiment instantly cheered, and we all pressed up, hoping to hear Sir Charles, who sat on his horse bare-headed before the regiment, address the men. Several minutes elapsed, however, and as he remained perfectly silent, the Governor-General passed on. In the evening there was a great dinner, and on Sir Charles's health being drunk, he got up and explained his silence that morning, "when we might," he remarked, "justly have expected to hear him address his old regiment. Until that moment he had been," he said, "under the impression that his heart was as hard as the sole of his boot; but when he saw his beloved old regiment, which he had never met since Corunna, so reduced in numbers, and with its colours so torn and riddled with shot, past associations so crowded upon him that he felt quite overcome, and utterly unable to utter a word."—*Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian*.

**HOLY SCRIPTURES.**—Men can never precisely explain the manner in which they were composed, nor, in particular, how the Spirit of God and the spirit of man are combined in them so as to make them at the same time divine and human—a divine word reaching to heaven, and at the same time human, and quite near to us. This is not less difficult to explain than the manner in which the divine and human nature were united in Jesus Christ. This parallel is not mine, for Scripture calls itself the written Word, and it calls Jesus Christ the "Word made flesh." But, however the Holy Scriptures may have been composed, "they literally are heaven speaking upon earth:" they are the maxims of the kingdom of heaven communicated to men in human language, as if the invisible world were come down amongst them and placed before their eyes. There is no other book, even amongst the best, which like this makes known to us the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. All are more or less tainted with human errors—this alone is exempt from them. It is the book of God, full of the truth of God; in it we hear God speak by the Holy Spirit. We see God, man, the present, the future, time, and eternity, described exactly as they are. "For any one who has thus understood what Scripture is it will not be difficult to confess the use he ought to make of it. We ought to interrogate the Scriptures as we would an angel from heaven, sent by God at this very moment on purpose to instruct us—or, what is still better, as we would question the Lord Jesus Christ if we could speak to him and hear him. And, in fact, we do speak to him and hear him when we read the Holy Scriptures, for they reveal him, and through him they reveal all things by his Spirit."—*Adolphe Monod*.

**SLEEPING IN CHURCH—A RETORT.**—The congregation of Luman, in Forfarshire, had distressed the minister by the habit of sleeping in church. One day Jamie Fraser, an idiot, was sitting in the front gallery, when many were slumbering around him. "Look," said the minister, "you see even Jamie the idiot does not fall asleep as many of you are doing." Jamie, not liking to be thus designated, coolly replied, "An' I hadna been an idiot, I would have been sleeping too."

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